

**CDL**  
**(COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSE)**  
**QUICK GUIDE**

*With Supplement for Modernized Version*



View the National Commercial Driver's License Manual online at:  
[iowadot.gov/media/326](http://iowadot.gov/media/326)



# Contents

Definitions _____	1	Iowa driver's licensing requirements for some common passenger vehicles _____	8
Entry-Level Driver Training _____	2	Iowa driver's licensing: Typical tow truck configurations _____	9
Determining the CDL class needed _____	3	CDL and CLP endorsements _____	10
Who is exempt from holding a CDL in Iowa? _____	4	CDL and CLP restrictions _____	11
Requirements to obtain a CDL _____	4	Restricted CDL _____	12
Getting your Class A, B, or C CDL for the first time _____	5	Tickets/Violations _____	13
CDL licensing _____	6	Disqualifications _____	13
CDL vehicle/license classification system _____	6	Open Container law _____	13
CDL Licensing and Passenger Vehicle Configurations _____	7	Class D chauffeur's license requirements _____	13
Iowa driver's licensing requirements for some common truck configurations _____	7	CDL Testing _____	14

## Definitions

### CLP – commercial learner’s permit

### CMV – commercial motor vehicle

A motor vehicle or combination of vehicles used to transport passengers or property if **any** of the following apply.

- The combination of vehicles has a GCWR of 26,001 or more pounds provided the towed vehicle has a GVWR of 10,001 or more pounds.
- The motor vehicle has a GVWR of 26,001 or more pounds.
- The motor vehicle has a GVWR less than 26,001 pounds and is designed to transport 16 or more passengers, including the driver; or is redesigned or modified to transport fewer than 16 persons with disabilities.
- The motor vehicle has a GVWR less than 26,001 pounds and is used to transport placardable amounts of hazardous materials (HAZMAT).

### ELDT - Entry-Level Driver Training

Federally- required minimum training standards for commercial driver license (CDL) holders and applicants. ELDT is required for drivers applying the first time for a Class A or Class B CDL; upgrading an existing CDL (Class B CDL to Class A CDL); or adding the following endorsements: hazardous materials (H), passenger (P), or school bus (S).

### FMCSA – Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

### GCWR – gross combination weight rating

The combined gross vehicle weight ratings of two or more units. ( ex. GVWR of power unit + GVWR of trailer = GCWR)

### GVWR – gross vehicle weight rating

This is the manufacturer’s rating of the maximum load plus the weight of the vehicle. The GVWR label may be located in the cab, on the trailer hitch, or on the front of the trailer.

### Hazardous material

A substance or material that has been determined by the U.S. Department of Transportation to be capable of posing an unreasonable risk to health, safety, and property when transported in commerce, and which has been so designated.

### Interstate commerce

Moving goods or passengers across a state line, including international boundaries, or wholly within one state as part of a through movement that originates or terminates in another state or country.

### Intrastate commerce

Moving goods or passengers solely within the state of Iowa provided those goods and passengers originate in Iowa and their destination is within Iowa.

# ELDT Entry-Level Driver Training



## Entry-Level Driver Training Requirements for CDL Applicants

The new Entry-Level Driver Training (ELDT) regulations require that all entry-level drivers of commercial motor vehicles (CMVs) who are subject to ELDT regulations receive training from a provider listed on [FMCSA's Training Provider Registry](#).

To be eligible to take the Class A or Class B CDL skills test, the S or P skills test, or the H knowledge test, commercial driver's license (CDL) applicants must have completed applicable entry-level driver training from a registered training provider.

### What must drivers do to meet the ELDT requirements?

#### Complete training with a registered training provider

Entry-level drivers subject to the ELDT regulations must select a training provider that is listed on the Training Provider Registry. Only registered training providers will be able to submit certification of a driver's completion of entry-level driver training to the Training Provider Registry.

#### When must a driver have completed their entry-level driver training?

Training must be completed before taking a CDL skills test or, if the driver is applying for the H endorsement, the knowledge test.

A State is **not permitted** to administer the CDL skills or knowledge test to driver if they cannot electronically verify that these requirements are met. A State may issue a commercial learner's permit (CLP) to a driver who has not yet completed entry-level driver training.

Use the scenario chart below to determine if you are required to complete entry-level driver training.

### If ▶ Then

A driver holds a CLP that was issued before February 7, 2022...	The driver is not required to complete entry-level driver training, as long as the driver obtains a CDL before the CLP expires.
A driver was issued a CDL or an S, P, or H endorsement before February 7, 2022...	The driver is not required to complete entry-level driver training for the previously-issued license or endorsement, even if it has since lapsed.
A driver holds a CLP that was issued before February 7, 2022, but the CLP expires before the driver applies for their CDL...	The driver must complete the required entry-level driver training before being permitted to take the CDL skills test.
A driver obtains a CLP on or after February 7, 2022...	The driver must complete the required entry-level driver training before being permitted to take the CDL skills test, S or P skills test, or H knowledge test.
A driver held a CDL prior to the compliance date, and applies for an upgrade to a higher class of CDL, or an S, P, or H endorsement for the first time on or after February 7, 2022...	The driver must complete the required entry-level driver training for the class of CDL to which the driver is upgrading or the endorsement(s) for which the driver is applying before being permitted to take the applicable CDL skills test or H endorsement knowledge test.

**ELDT EXCEPTIONS.** The ELDT regulations do not apply to individuals that are not required to have a CDL as outlined in 49 CFR part 383, or for whom the state has waived the CDL skills test.

March 1, 2022



**LEARN MORE AT:** <http://tpr.fmcsa.dot.gov> or scan the code using the camera on your smartphone.



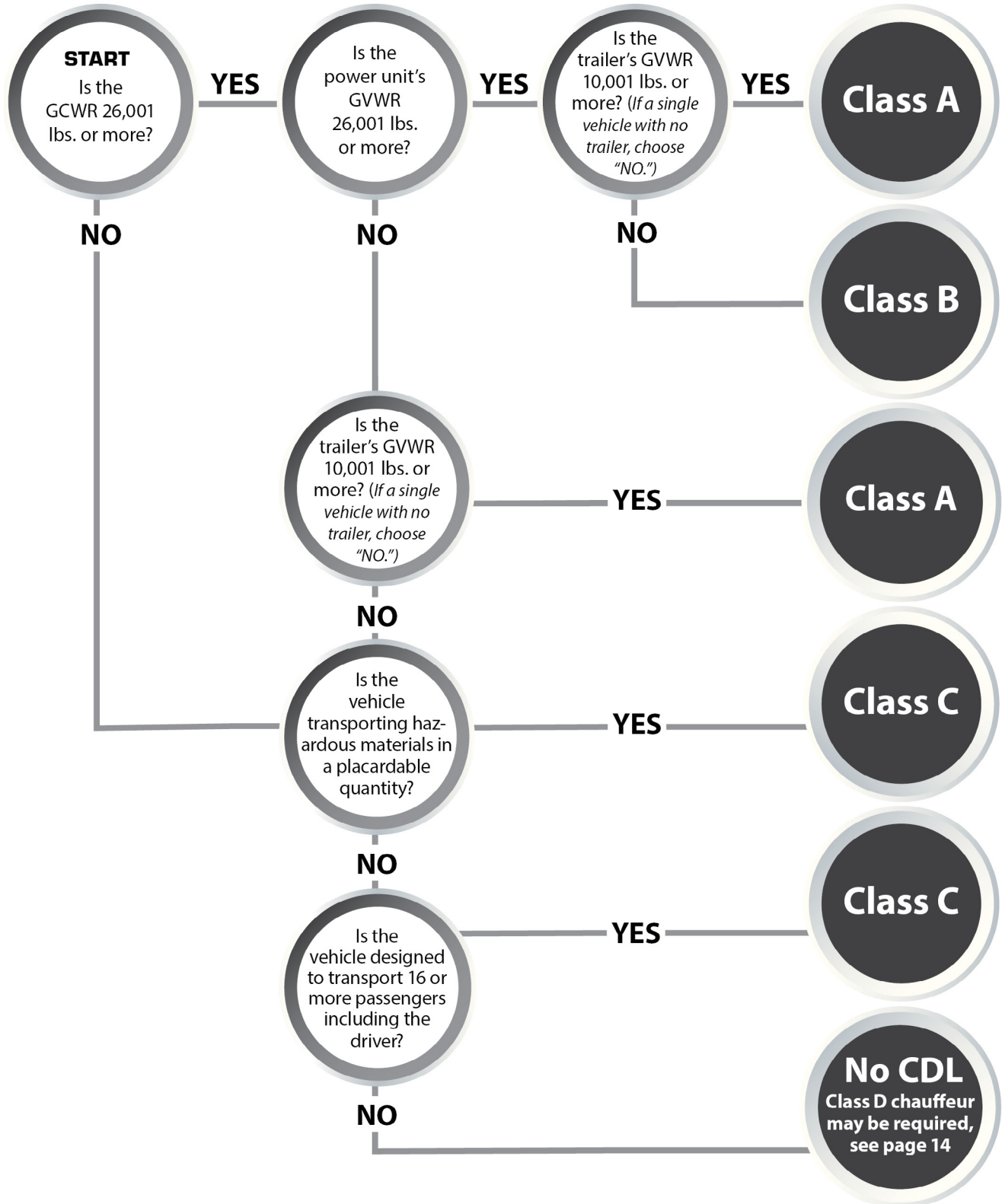
# Determining the CDL class needed

## CDL class type quick reference diagram

**GVWR:** weight of an individual power unit, trailer, or other towed unit.

**GCWR:** combined weight of the two vehicles that make up a combination vehicle.

$GVWR (\text{Power Unit}) + GVWR (\text{Trailer}) = GCWR$



# Who is exempt from holding a CDL in Iowa?



## Firefighter and police officer



A volunteer or paid firefighter while operating a fire vehicle or a peace officer operating a commercial motor vehicle while executing related emergency governmental functions.



## Military

Active duty military personnel while operating equipment owned or operated by the U.S. Department of Defense.



## Recreational vehicle/motor home

A person operating a recreational vehicle for personal or family use or a person operating a vehicle with less than 26,001 GVWR towing a towable recreational vehicle or fifth-wheel trailer for personal or family use.



## Farmer

A farmer or person working for a farmer operating a covered farm vehicle. Covered farm vehicles must be identified in one of the following ways: a special farm license plate, an "F" sticker on the license plate, or drivers must carry a completed "Designation as Iowa Covered Farm Vehicle" form in the covered farm vehicle during operation. For more information about covered farm vehicles, visit: <https://iowadot.gov/drivers-licenses-ids/commercial-drivers/farmer-guidance>



## Home care

An in-home care aide operating a motor vehicle in the course of the in-home care aide's duties.

# Requirements to Obtain a CDL

- Be at least age 18.
- **Provide proof of full name, date of birth, and Social Security number.**
- **Proof of citizenship or lawful permanent residency.**
- **Provide proof of Iowa residency**
- **Vision screening**
- **Hold a CLP (commercial learner's permit) for at least 14 days prior to application for CDL**
- **An interstate driving record check will be performed for all CDL applicants; the check must show the applicant is eligible for commercial licensing in all other states.**

## • Knowledge tests

The knowledge test(s) that an applicant is required to take depends on the type of license, including any endorsements, the driver is applying for. (number of questions/allowed to miss):

Question Topic	Number of questions/allowed to miss
General knowledge for any CDL	(50/10)
Combination vehicle for Class A	(20/04)
Air brake	(25/05)
Passenger	(20/04)
School bus	(20/04)
Doubles/Triples	(20/04)
Hazmat	(30/06)
Tank	(20/04)
Iowa operator (if applicable)	(25/05)

- **Complete Entry-Level Driver Training, if applicable.**
- **Skills test – You must provide a vehicle representing the type and class of license you are applying for. There are three phases of tests:**

1. **Pre-trip vehicle inspection skills.**  
Review section 11 in the CDL Manual <https://iowadot.gov/pubs/CDL-manual.pdf>
2. **Basic vehicle control skills (turning and backing maneuvers).**  
See section 12 of the CDL manual. <https://iowadot.gov/pubs/CDL-manual.pdf>
3. **Safe on-road driving skills.**  
See section 13 of the CDL manual. <https://iowadot.gov/pubs/CDL-manual.pdf>

The use of interpreters and/or translators is prohibited by federal law. The knowledge test will be administered in an automated format and can be administered in a foreign language, provided no interpreter is used in administering the test.

# Getting your Class A, B, or C CDL for the first time

## STEP 1:

### Determine the type of CDL you need

Visit <https://iowadot.gov/drivers-licenses-ids/commercial-drivers> to determine what type (class) of CDL you need.

## STEP 2:

### Make your appointment

Make an appointment at a driver's license service center to take the knowledge test for the CDL class you're applying for.

## STEP 3:

### Prepare for your appointment

Before your appointment, visit <https://iowadot.gov/drivers-licenses-ids/commercial-drivers> to determine what you need to bring to your appointment and access study materials.

## STEP 4:

### Get your commercial learner's permit (CLP)

Upon successful completion of your knowledge test, you will be issued a commercial learner's permit (CLP). The cost of the CLP is \$12, and it is valid for one year.

#### What can I do with my CLP?

- Drive a commercial vehicle specific to the type of CLP you obtained when accompanied by another driver who has a CDL valid for the same type of commercial vehicle.
- A CLP must be held for at least 14 days before the skills (driving) test can be completed.

#### What can't I do with my CLP?

- Drive a commercial vehicle by yourself.
- Drive a vehicle that your CLP is not valid for.
- Use a cell phone while driving a commercial vehicle.
- Carry passengers while operating a commercial vehicle (other than the CDL driver accompanying you, other trainees, and test examiners).
- Drive a commercial vehicle containing hazmat or drive a tank vehicle that previously contained hazmat that is not purged of residue.
- Drive a tank vehicle containing cargo.

*The same rules that apply to CDL drivers also apply to CLP drivers. Certain violations could result in the disqualification of your commercial operating privileges.*

## STEP 5:

### Complete entry-level driver training (ELDT)

ELDT regulations require that all entry-level drivers of commercial motor vehicles receive training from a provider listed on FMCSA's Training Provider Registry.

<https://tpr.fmcsa.dot.gov/>

- Type and cost of ELDT varies based on the provider you choose.

## STEP 6:

### Complete your CDL skills (driving) test

Make an appointment at a driver's license service center or with an authorized third-party tester to complete your skills test.

Completion of your ELDT will be verified electronically before you will be able to take your skills test.

If you choose a third-party tester, you will still need to make an appointment at a driver's license service center to get your CDL.

## STEP 7:

### Certify how you operate with your CDL




All CDL holders must certify how they use their commercial motor vehicles, through a Medical Certificate with a Medical Examiner. To get a Medical Examiner's Certificate, you need to see a doctor who is active on a Federally approved special list called the National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners.

[Find a doctor on the National Registry](#)

The provider will submit the medical certification, electronically, through the NRII database. Visit <https://iowadot.gov/drivers-licenses-ids/commercial-drivers/medical-cards-certification> to learn more.









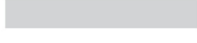
# CDL Licensing

This chart offers another way to look at what type of CDL is required for some common commercial motor vehicles.











<b>CDL vehicle/license classification system</b>	
<b>Type A vehicle/ Class A CDL</b>	<p>Any combination of vehicles with a GCWR of 26,001 or more pounds, provided the GVWR of the vehicle(s) being towed is in excess of 10,000 pounds.</p> <p>Examples include, but are not limited to:</p>  <p><i>Class A license holders may, with appropriate endorsements, operate vehicles within types B and C.</i></p>
<b>Type B vehicle/Class B CDL</b>	<p>Any single vehicle with a GVWR of 26,001 or more pounds, or any such vehicle towing a vehicle not in excess of 10,000 pounds GVWR.</p> <p>Examples include, but are not limited to:</p>  <p><i>Class B license holders may, with appropriate endorsements, operate vehicles within Type C.</i></p>
<b>Type C vehicle/Class C CDL</b>	<p>Any single vehicle, or combination of vehicles, that meets neither the definition of Type A nor Type B but is designed to transport 16 or more passengers including the driver; or is redesigned or modified to transport fewer than 16 persons with disabilities.</p> <p>This also applies to vehicles not meeting the Type A or B definitions but are used in the transport of placardable amounts of hazardous materials.</p> <p>Examples include, but are not limited to:</p> 
<p><b>CDL fees: \$8 per year</b> (initial and renewal) plus applicable endorsement or restriction fees.</p>	
<p><i>The holder of a Class A, B, or C CDL may also operate passenger cars and other non-CMV's, except a motorcycle, without additional licensing.</i></p>	

# CDL Licensing and Passenger Vehicle Configurations

This chart offers an alternative way of determining which type of CDL license you require by use of towed GVWR, GCWR, and power unit GVWR. Additionally, there is guidance on Iowa driver licensing requirements for some common passenger vehicles.

Iowa driver's licensing requirements for some common truck configurations						
Power unit GVWR		Towed vehicle GVWR		GCWR		License class
		Less than 10,001 pounds	10,001 pounds or more	Less than 26,001 pounds	26,001 pounds or more	
	Less than 16,001 lbs.			<b>X</b>		C noncommercial
	26,001 lbs. or more				<b>X</b>	B CDL
	Less than 26,001 lbs.	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>		C noncommercial
	Less than 26,001 lbs.		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		C noncommercial
	Less than 16,001 lbs.		<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	A CDL
	16,001 to 26,000 lbs.		<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	A CDL
	26,001 lbs. or more	<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>	B CDL
	26,001 lbs. or more		<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	A CDL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR):</b> weight specified by the manufacturer as the loaded weight of a single vehicle.</li> <li>• <b>Gross combination weight rating (GCWR):</b> combined weights specified by the manufacturer as the loaded weight of each vehicle in a combination of vehicles.</li> </ul>						
 <b>The towed vehicle affects license class.</b>						

## Iowa driver's licensing requirements for some common passenger vehicles

Typical vehicle	Seating capacity*	Driver status		GVWR		License class
		Volunteer	Paid	Less than 26,001 lbs	26,001 or more lbs	
	Less than 16	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>		C noncommercial
	Less than 16		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		D noncommercial
 <i>before Jan. 1, 2017</i> <i>See Chauffeur's License page 14</i>	Less than 16		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		D noncommercial
 <i>Jan. 1, 2017 and after</i> <i>See Chauffeur's License page 14</i>	7-15		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		D noncommercial
 <i>Jan. 1, 2017 and after</i> <i>See Chauffeur's License page 14</i>	Less than 7		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		C noncommercial
<i>Ridesharing Vehicle</i> <i>Jan. 1, 2017 and after</i> <i>(any personal vehicle used for ridesharing such as Uber, Lyft, etc.)</i> <i>See Ridesharing Services page 14</i>	Less than 16		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		C noncommercial
	16 or more	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		C CDL
	16 or more	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	B CDL
	16 or more	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	B CDL
	16 or more	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	B CDL
	16 or more	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	B CDL



\* Seating capacity includes the driver.

- **Gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR):** weight specified by the manufacturer as the loaded weight of a single vehicle.
- A Class C noncommercial license is the basic driver's license.

# Typical tow truck configurations

The type of license required when driving the tow truck only, without a towed vehicle, may be different from the license required when the tow truck is towing another vehicle, depending upon the weight of the towed vehicle.

This chart shows the license required for the tow truck alone and the license required when the tow truck is towing another vehicle.

Iowa driver's licensing: Typical tow truck configurations					
Tow Truck Alone	Vehicle GVWR		License Class		
 Example 1	Less than 26,001 lbs.		C noncommercial		
 Example 2	26,001 lbs. or more		B CDL		
Tow Truck Example (above)	Towed Vehicle GVWR		GCWR		License Class (tow truck plus towed vehicle)
	Less than 10,001 lbs.	10,001 lbs. or more	Less than 26,001 lbs.	26,001 lbs. or more	
1	X		X		C noncommercial
1		X	X		C noncommercial
1		X		X	A CDL
2	X			X	B CDL
2		X		X	A CDL

## Notes:

A driver who tows a vehicle in an emergency "first move" from the site of a vehicle malfunction or accident on a highway to the nearest appropriate repair facility is not required to have the endorsement(s) applicable to the towed vehicle. In any subsequent move, a driver who tows a vehicle from one repair or disposal facility to another is required to have the endorsement(s) applicable to the towed vehicle with one exception: a tow truck driver is not required to have a passenger endorsement to tow a passenger vehicle.

## CDL and CLP endorsements

### **P (passenger) FEE: \$10**

Required for any vehicle rated for 16 or more people, including the operator, or originally designed for 16 or more people, but altered to provide space for passengers with disabilities. Knowledge and driving test required.

### **S (school bus) FEE: \$10**

Required when transporting pre-primary, primary, or secondary school students in a yellow school bus. The passenger endorsement is always required. Knowledge and driving test.

### **H (hazardous materials/hazmat) FEE: \$5**

Required for operating any vehicle carrying a quantity of hazardous materials requiring placarding. Knowledge test for initial issuance or out-of-state hazmat endorsement transfer, renewal, and upgrade required. **A CDL with this endorsement is not eligible for electronic renewal.**

CDL holders applying for an Iowa DOT hazardous materials endorsement must have a valid Transportation Security Administration's Security Threat Assessment. The Iowa DOT does not administer this program. For information about the assessment, call the TSA at 855-347-8371 or visit: [www.tsa.gov/for-industry/hazmat-endorsement](http://www.tsa.gov/for-industry/hazmat-endorsement). Knowledge test required.

### **T (doubles/triples) FEE: \$5**

Required when pulling multiple trailers. Knowledge test required.

Note: Iowa law does not permit the operation of triple trailers; however, a driver whose home state is Iowa may obtain the endorsement to haul a triple trailer in those jurisdictions where they are legal

### **N (tank) FEE: \$5**

Required for vehicles with a permanent or temporarily attached tank or tanks with an individual rated capacity of more than 119 gallons and a combined rated capacity of 1,000 gallons. This does not include vehicles transporting an empty storage tank with a rated capacity of 1,000 gallons or more that is not designated for transportation and is temporarily attached to a flatbed trailer.

### **X (tank and hazmat)**

Both the tanker knowledge test and the hazmat knowledge tests are required and the endorsements are paid for separately (see above for fee information). **A CDL with this endorsement is not eligible for electronic renewal.**

Note: the hazmat endorsement fee is charged at each renewal. All other endorsement fees are only charged one time when the driver obtains the endorsement for the first time. This does not apply to individuals reinstating endorsements on their CDL. A reinstatement of endorsements will accrue endorsement fees at time of issuance.

## CDL and CLP Restrictions

### The following restrictions may apply to a CDL or a CLP

**E – No manual transmission equipped CMV.** This restriction applies to a licensee who performs the skills test in a vehicle equipped with automatic transmission and prohibits the operation of a commercial motor vehicle equipped with a manual transmission

**K – Intrastate only.** This restriction applies to a licensee who self-certifies to non-expected intrastate or expected intrastate driving and prohibits the operation of a commercial motor vehicle in interstate commerce. For more information about medical certification requirements visit <http://iowadot.gov/mvd/cdl/medical-cards-and-certification>.

**L – no air brake equipped CMV.** This restriction applies to a licensee who either fails the air brake component of the knowledge test or performs the skills test in a vehicle not equipped with air brakes and prohibits the operation of a commercial motor vehicle equipped with an air brake system.

**M – no Class A passenger vehicle.** This restriction applies to a licensee who applies for a passenger endorsement and performs the skills test in a passenger vehicle that requires a Class B commercial driver's license and prohibits operation of a passenger vehicle that requires a Class A commercial driver's license.

**N – no Class A and B passenger vehicle.** This restriction applies to a licensee who applies for a passenger endorsement and performs the skills test in a passenger vehicle that requires a Class C commercial driver's license and prohibits operation of a passenger vehicle that requires a Class A or Class B commercial driver's license.

**O – No tractor-trailer CMV.** This restriction applies to a licensee who performs the skills test in a combination vehicle for a Class A commercial driver's license with the power unit and towed unit connected with a pintle hook or other non-fifth wheel connection and prohibits operation of a tractor-trailer combination connected by a fifth wheel.

**V – medical variance.** This restriction applies to a licensee when the department is notified that the driver has been issued a medical variance and indicates there is information about a medical variance on the driver record accessible to law enforcement.

**Z – No full air brake equipped CMV.** This restriction applies to a licensee who performs the skills test in a vehicle equipped with air over hydraulic brakes and prohibits the operation of a commercial motor vehicle equipped with any braking system operating fully on the air brake principle.

### The following additional restrictions may *only be applied to a CLP*

**P – no passengers in CMV bus.** This restriction applies to a permit holder who has a commercial learner's permit with a passenger or school bus endorsement and prohibits the operation of a commercial motor vehicle carrying passengers, other than federal/state auditors and inspectors, test examiners, other trainees, and the commercial driver's license holder accompanying the permit holder.

**X – no cargo in CMV tank vehicle.** This restriction applies to a permit holder who has a commercial learner's permit with a tank vehicle endorsement and prohibits the operation of any tank vehicle containing cargo or any tank vehicle that previously contained hazardous materials that has not been purged of any residue.

## Restricted CDL

A restricted CDL may be issued to suppliers or employees of suppliers of agricultural inputs. Agricultural inputs means applicators of agricultural chemicals, fertilizer, seed, or animal feeds. The applicant may operate Class B or Class C vehicles, but not a Class A combination vehicle.

The applicant must have two years of driving experience with a license permitting at least two years of unaccompanied driving. This does not include a motorized bicycle license or a special minor's restricted license.

Additionally, the applicant must have a good driving record for the most recent two-year period. A "good driving record" means a driving record showing:

- No multiple licenses.
- No driver's license suspensions, revocations, disqualifications, denials, bars, or cancellations of any kind.
- No convictions in any type of motor vehicle for:
  - Driving under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance.
  - Leaving the scene of an accident.
  - Committing any felony involving a motor vehicle.
  - Speeding 15 miles per hour or more over the posted speed limit.
  - Reckless driving, drag racing, or eluding or attempting to elude a law enforcement officer.
  - Improper or erratic lane changes.
  - Following too closely.
  - A moving violation that contributed to a motor vehicle accident.
  - A violation deemed serious under 761 IAC 615.17(321).
- No record of contributive accidents

A restricted CDL is valid for a commercial motor vehicle (CMV) requiring tank, air brake, and hazardous materials endorsements/ restrictions; but no CDL knowledge or driving tests will be required, nor will endorsement fees be charged, and no CDL endorsements/restrictions will show on the license.

Restricted CDL holders may operate between the place of business and the farm currently being serviced, but not to exceed 150 miles from the place of business.

Individual periods that are less than 210 days may be taken in 70 or 105 day increments, provided the cumulative period of validity in the calendar year does not exceed 210 days. An individual period of validity may be extended by 35 days, provided the application for extension is made before the individual period expires and again provided the cumulative period of validity in the calendar year does not exceed 210 days. (An application for extension that is made after an individual period expires will be treated as an application for a new individual period.)

A restricted commercial driver's license must be validated for commercial motor vehicle operation for each individual period of validity. This means that the licensee must have their good driving record confirmed and a new card issued at each application for an individual period of validity.

Examples:

**Driver A** elects a single restricted CDL valid for 210 days, beginning March 15 and continuing through Oct. 11. Driver A will go to a driver's license issuance site for the restricted CDL before it is issued to confirm his good driving record and be issued the card, and after the restricted CDL expires will not be eligible for an extension or another restricted CDL until the next calendar year.

**Driver B** elects to divide her 210 days for the calendar year into two 105-day periods, one beginning March 1 and continuing through June 14, and one beginning Sept. 1 and continuing through Dec. 15. Driver B will go to a driver's license issuance site for each restricted CDL before it is issued to confirm her good driving record and be issued the card, and after the second restricted CDL expires will not be eligible for an extension or another restricted CDL until the next calendar year.

**Driver C** elects to divide his 210 days for the calendar year into three 70-day periods, one beginning April 10 and continuing through June 19; one beginning Aug. 14 and continuing through Oct. 23; and one beginning Nov. 1 and continuing through Jan. 1. Driver C will go to a driver's license issuance site for each restricted CDL before it is issued to confirm his good driving record and be issued the card, and after the third restricted CDL expires will not be eligible for an extension or another restricted CDL until the next calendar year.

**Driver D** initially applies for a restricted CDL that is valid for 105 days, beginning March 20 and continuing through July 3, but because of flooding decides to extend that period of validity by 35 days to Aug. 7. Driver D expended 140 days of her total 210 days for the calendar year, and would be eligible only for a second restricted CDL valid for a period of 70 days the remainder of the calendar year.

#### The only hazardous materials allowed to be carried with a restricted CDL:

- **Liquid fertilizers**, such as anhydrous ammonia, in quantities of 3,000 gallons or less.
- **Solid fertilizers**, such as ammonium nitrate, provided they are not mixed with any organic substance.

The cost of a restricted CDL is \$8 per year. Each time the driver comes in to update the validation period there will be a \$10 charge and a complete search of the applicant's driving record.

When the driver is not operating a CMV, he/she can only drive the types of vehicles he/she was valid for before the restricted CDL was issued. That license type will be indicated on the restriction supplement. A person already holding a CDL or commercial learner's permit is not eligible for a restricted CDL.

## Tickets/Violations

Federal regulations require that Iowa licensed commercial drivers must report **all** violations (except parking violations) to their employers within 30 days of conviction, whether the driver was operating a commercial or noncommercial vehicle.

The drivers must also notify the Iowa Department of Transportation, P.O. Box 9204, Des Moines, Iowa 50306-9204 of any out-of-state violations received (except parking violations) in commercial or noncommercial vehicles.

Unemployed drivers should notify the Iowa Department of Transportation of all violations (except parking violations). Information required in this notification includes date, location (town and state), driver's name, driver's license number, driver's signature, nature of violation, and type of vehicle operated. Individual drivers should determine if the requirements of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's regulations in the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations 383.31 and 391.27 apply to them.

## Disqualifications

Federal regulations require that certain offenses committed in a CMV or non-CMV will result in a CDL holder's disqualification for specified periods of time, up to and including possible lifetime disqualification. For further information on specific disqualification reasons, please refer to CFR 383.51 or refer to our CDL manual online at <https://iowadot.gov/pubs/CDL-manual.pdf>.

## Open Container law

Iowa law and federal safety regulations prevent the driver of any commercial vehicle from having **opened or unopened** alcohol in the vehicle. The penalty for a violation is a fine and 24-hours out-of-service.

It is illegal in Iowa to drive with an open container of beer or any other alcoholic beverage if the open container is in the passenger compartment, including the glove compartment of a noncommercial vehicle. This applies to both drivers and passengers.

The penalty for violating this open container law can be a \$100 fine or 30 days in jail.

***A work permit (temporary restricted license) may not be used to operate a CMV.***

## Class D chauffeur's license requirements

### Class D license fees: \$8 per year (initial and renewal)

### The Class D (chauffeur's) license is NOT valid as a CDL.

Iowa law requires drivers to possess a Class D (chauffeur's) license unless they possess a CDL valid for the vehicle when transporting 15 or fewer persons, including driver, for wages, compensation, or hire.

Persons exempt from Class D (chauffeur's) license requirements are:

- Military personnel while on active duty and while operating military vehicles.
- A paid or volunteer fire fighter operating a fire truck, or an ambulance or rescue squad attendant when operating an ambulance or rescue squad apparatus.
- A firefighter, ambulance driver, or rescue squad attendant while operating a fire, ambulance, or rescue vehicle.
- Employees of the Iowa Department of Corrections, Iowa Veterans Home, Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School, Iowa School for the Blind, or Department of Human Services transporting persons or a home care aid in the course of their duties.

The Class D (chauffeur's) license will have endorsement 3 on the license indicating that it is valid to operate a passenger vehicle designed to carry 15 or fewer persons, including the driver.

A Class D license is also valid to operate a private passenger car or other vehicles, except a motorcycle or a vehicle requiring specific licensing to operate.

To obtain a Class D license with endorsement "3," the driver must have a clean driving record for the previous two years. If the driver does not have a valid license, they will also be required to take a driving and knowledge test.

### Ridesharing Services:

A person driving a personal, noncommercial vehicle as a rideshare driver to offer or provide prearranged rides through a digital network controlled by a ridesharing company (for instance, Uber or Lyft) in return for compensation or payment or fee is **not** required to obtain a Class D Chauffeur's license and may drive for that purpose with a Class C noncommercial driver's license.

Taxicab drivers: A person operating a taxicab with a seating capacity of less than seven persons that is not being operated on a regular route or between specified points is **not** required to obtain a Class D chauffeur's license and may drive for that purpose with a Class C noncommercial driver's license.

# Chauffeur License Requirements

VEHICLE TYPE (GVWR=gross vehicle weight rating)	LICENSE REQUIRED
<b>CDL-exempt truck-tractor semitrailer combination</b> (e.g., covered farm vehicle)	<b>Class C noncommercial</b>
<b>Single unit vehicle between 16,001-26,000 pounds GVWR</b> (e.g., straight truck)	<b>Class C noncommercial</b>
<b>Any vehicle transporting 15 or fewer persons, including the driver, for wages, compensation, or hire</b>	<b>No change</b>

\* Exemptions from chauffeur requirements under 321.1(8) include, but are not limited to, firefighters, ambulance attendants, and certain state agency patient or inmate transfers.

## CDL Testing

The CDL skill/driving tests are given Monday through Friday at the Iowa DOT's driver's license service centers. Some Iowa county treasurer's offices also offer the CDL skill/driving tests.

**Visit: <https://iowadot.gov/drivers-licenses-ids/find-dmv-location> to locate the testing site nearest you and make an appointment.**

## Contact Information

**Customer Services Bureau:** 515-244-8725 or 515-244-9124

**Department of Public Safety – Commercial Motor Vehicle Unit (CMVU)**

<https://dps.iowa.gov/commercial-motor-vehicle-unit-cmvu>

**Office of Motor Carrier Services:** 515-237-3264

**All CDL holders must certify how they use or intend to use their commercial motor vehicle and may be required to have a certified medical certificate completed and sent to the DOT.**

You will be asked to certify before you are issued a Commercial Learner's Permit. Please visit <https://iowadot.gov/drivers-licenses-ids/commercial-drivers/medical-cards-certification> for more information about these requirements so you are prepared to make this selection.

**[CDL Self-certification and Medical Examiner's Certificate Reporting Brochure](#)**

# Preparing for Your Vehicle Inspection Test

The checklists on this page and the following contain all the items you will be required to inspect based on the type of vehicle you're testing for.

A printed copy of the checklists will be provided to you when you take your test to check off items as you have completed them, or use as a reference.

To get credit for the inspection item(s), you must:

- Name,
- Point to and/or touch, and
- Fully explain what you are inspecting each safety critical item for.

## 1 Class A Inspection Tractor Semi-Trailer, Truck & Trailer, or Bus & Trailer



<p><b>In-Vehicle/Engine Start</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> *air or *hydraulic brake check <i>* Automatic failure if not performed correctly</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> parking &amp; trailer brake check</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> service brake check</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> lighting indicators</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> emergency equipment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> windshield &amp; traffic monitoring devices</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> wipers &amp; washers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> heater &amp; defroster</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> horn(s)</li> </ul> <p><b>Lights Operations Check</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> all external lights</li> </ul> <p><b>Front of Vehicle/Engine Area</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> lenses</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> fluid levels</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> fluid &amp; air leaks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> steering systems</li> </ul> <p><b>Steering Axle</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> tires</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> rims</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> lug nuts</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> springs/mounts &amp; u-bolts &amp; air bags &amp; shocks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> brake lines or hoses &amp; leaks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> brake contaminates</li> </ul>	<p><b>Side of Vehicle</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> lenses &amp; reflectors</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> traffic monitoring devices</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> battery</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> fuel tank(s)/DEF tank</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> frame(s) &amp; tandem release</li> </ul> <p><b>Combination Vehicles Only</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> air &amp; electric lines &amp; connectors</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> fifth wheel skid plate or pintle hook or tow hitch</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> kingpin &amp; apron &amp; gap or drawbar ring &amp; tongue or coupler &amp; tongue</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> locking &amp; safety devices</li> </ul> <p><b>Trailer Only</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> landing gear &amp; clearance</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> reflective tape</li> </ul> <p><b>Rear of Trailer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> lenses &amp; reflectors</li> </ul>
---	---

## 2

### Class B or Class C Inspection

Straight Truck or Other Straight Vehicle



#### In-Vehicle/Engine Start

- \*air or \*hydraulic brake check  
*\*Automatic failure if not performed correctly*
- parking & trailer brake check
- service brake check
- lighting indicators
- emergency equipment
- windshield & traffic monitoring devices
- wipers & washers
- heater & defroster
- horn(s)

#### Lights Operations Check

- all external lights

#### Front of Vehicle/Engine Area

- lenses
- fluid levels
- fluid & air leaks
- steering systems

#### Steering Axle

- tires
- rims
- lug nuts
- springs/mounts & u-bolts & air bags & shocks
- brake lines or hoses & leaks
- brake contaminates

#### Side of Vehicle

- lenses & reflectors
- traffic monitoring devices
- battery
- fuel tank(s)/DEF tank
- frame

#### Rear of Vehicle

- lenses & reflectors

## 3

### Class B or Class C Inspection

Passenger or School Bus



#### In-Vehicle/Engine Start

- \*air or \*hydraulic brake check  
*\*Automatic failure if not performed correctly*
- parking & trailer brake check
- service brake check
- lighting indicators
- emergency equipment
- windshield & traffic monitoring devices
- wipers & washers
- heater & defroster
- horn(s)

#### Passenger and School Bus Only

- passenger entry & lift
- emergency exits
- passenger seating
- passenger monitoring devices
- student lights (front & back) *\*School Bus Only*
- stop arm(s) & safety arm *\*School Bus Only*
- first aid & body fluid kits *\*School Bus Only*

#### Lights Operations Check

- all external lights

#### Front of Vehicle/Engine Area

- lenses
- fluid levels
- fluid & air leaks
- steering systems

#### Steering Axle

- tires
- rims
- lug nuts
- springs/mounts & u-bolts & air bags & shocks
- brake lines or hoses & leaks
- brake contaminates

#### Side of Vehicle

- lenses & reflectors
- traffic monitoring devices
- battery
- fuel tank(s)/DEF tank
- frame

#### Rear of Vehicle

- lenses & reflectors

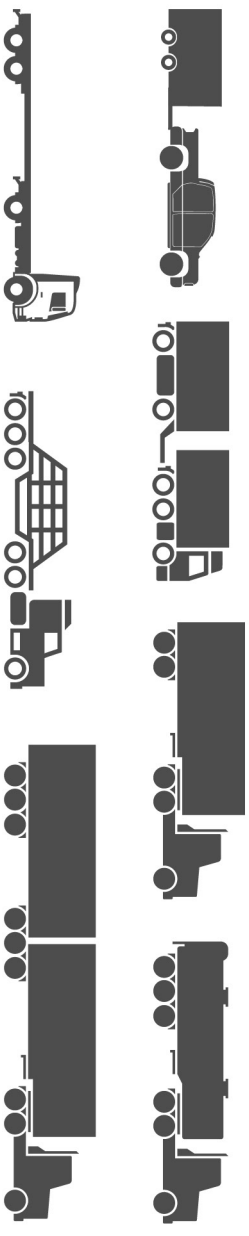
# CDL Classifications

## Representative Vehicle Examples

### Class A CDL

Any combination of vehicles with a GVWR of 26,001 or more lbs. provided the GVWR of the vehicle(s) being towed is in the excess of 10,000 lbs.

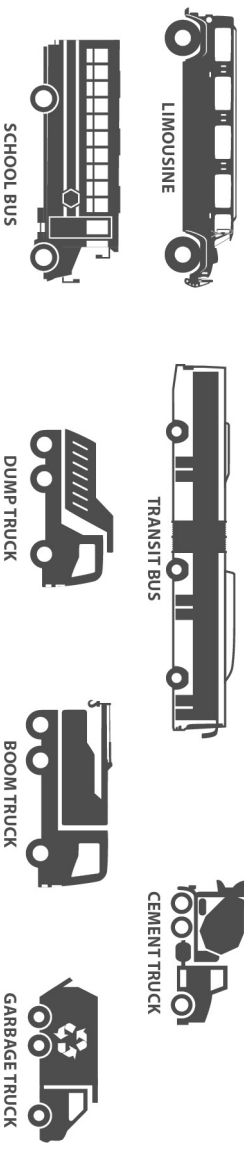
A common Class A vehicle is a tractor trailer also known as a semi.



### Class B CDL

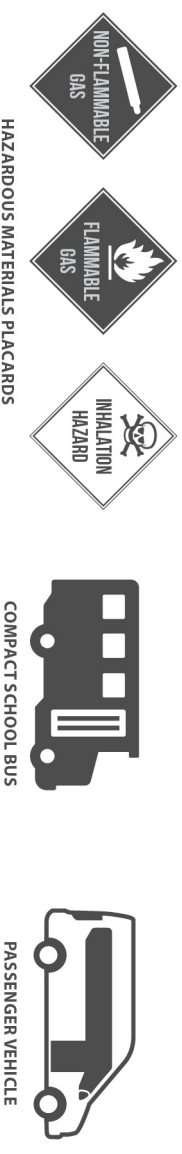
Any single vehicle with a GVWR of 26,001 or more lbs. or any such vehicle towing a vehicle NOT in excess of 10,000 lbs. GVWR.

A common Class A vehicle is a tractor trailer also known as a semi.



### Class C CDL

Any single vehicle, or combination of vehicles, that does not meet the definition of Class A or B, but is either designed to transport 16 or more passengers, including the driver, or is placarded for hazardous materials.



### Commercial Learners Permit (CLP)

You must have a CLP for at least 14 days before getting an initial CDL or a CDL upgrade, if it requires a skills test.

You can't take a skills test during the first 14 days after issuance. Scheduling a skills test when issuing the CLP is OK, as long as it is scheduled 15 days or more after the CLP was issued.

Your CLP is valid for one year from the date of issuance, with no renewal period.

### Entry-Level Driver Training (ELDT)

Effective February 2022, FMCSA regulations require that all entry-level drivers of commercial motor vehicles receive training from a provider listed on FMCA's Training Provider Registry. [tpr.fmcsa.dot.gov](http://tpr.fmcsa.dot.gov)

**DRIVERS MUST TEST IN A REPRESENTATIVE VEHICLE.**

### CDL Renewals

**(Proof of lawful presence)**

**U.S. citizens are only required to show proof of lawful presence one time.** When renewing their CDL, drivers will need to bring one of the following documents:

- Certified copy of U.S. Birth Certificate
- Valid U.S. Passport
- Consular Report of Birth Abroad (CRBA)
- Certificate of Naturalization
- Certificate of Citizenship
- Permanent resident card
- Employment authorization document (EAD) or I-94 document

LICENSE TYPE	KNOWLEDGE TESTS REQUIRED	REQUIRED TESTING	POSSIBLE ENDORSEMENTS	POSSIBLE RESTRICTS <i>Restrictions only added to a CLP</i>
<b>CLASS A</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General knowledge exam</li> <li>Combination vehicle-knowledge exam</li> <li>Air brake - knowledge exam (if applicable)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-Trip Inspection</li> <li>Basic skills</li> <li>Road Test</li> </ul> <p>Adding the following endorsements always requires pretrip/skills/road testing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>P - Passenger vehicle</li> <li>S - School bus</li> </ul>	<p>H - Hazardous Materials</p> <p>N - Tank Vehicle</p> <p>T - Doubles/Triples</p> <p>X - Hazmat &amp; Tank combo</p>	<p>E - No manual transmission equipped CMV</p> <p>K - CDL Intrastate Only</p> <p>L - No air brake equipped CMV</p> <p>M - No Class A passenger vehicle</p> <p>N - No Class A &amp; B passenger vehicle</p> <p>O - No tractor trailer CMV</p> <p>V - CDL Medical Variance</p> <p><b>X - No cargo in a CMV tank vehicle*</b></p> <p>Z - No full airbrake equipped CMV</p>
<b>CLASS B</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General knowledge exam</li> <li>Air brake - knowledge exam (if applicable)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-Trip Inspection</li> <li>Basic skills</li> <li>Road Test</li> </ul> <p>Adding the following endorsements always requires pretrip/skills/road testing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>P - Passenger vehicle</li> <li>S - School bus</li> </ul>	<p>H - Hazardous Materials</p> <p>N - Tank Vehicle</p> <p>P - Passenger Vehicle</p> <p>S - School bus</p> <p>X - Hazmat &amp; Tank combo</p>	<p>E - No manual transmission equipped CMV</p> <p>K - CDL Intrastate Only</p> <p>L - No air brake equipped CMV</p> <p>N - No Class A &amp; B passenger vehicle</p> <p><b>P - No Passengers in a CMV Bus*</b></p> <p>V - CDL Medical Variance</p> <p><b>X - No cargo in a CMV tank vehicle*</b></p> <p>Z - No full airbrake equipped CMV</p>
<b>CLASS C</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General knowledge exam</li> <li>Air brake - knowledge exam (if applicable)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-Trip Inspection</li> <li>Basic skills</li> <li>Road Test</li> </ul> <p>Adding the following endorsements always requires pretrip/skills/road testing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>P - Passenger vehicle</li> <li>S - School bus</li> </ul>	<p>H - Hazardous Materials</p> <p>N - Tank Vehicle</p> <p>P - Passenger Vehicle</p> <p>S - School bus</p> <p>X - Hazmat &amp; Tank combo</p>	<p>E - No manual transmission equipped CMV</p> <p>K - CDL Intrastate Only</p> <p>L - No air brake equipped CMV</p> <p><b>P - No Passengers in a CMV Bus*</b></p> <p>V - CDL Medical Variance</p> <p><b>X - No cargo in a CMV tank vehicle*</b></p> <p>Z - No full airbrake equipped CMV</p>



Iowa DOT ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other nondiscrimination statutes. If you need more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact Iowa DOT Civil Rights at 515-239-1111 or by email at [civil.rights@iowadot.us](mailto:civil.rights@iowadot.us).



---

Iowa Department of Transportation